

*Highland, NY* - For the first time ever, cyclists and pedestrians will enjoy a well lit Walkway Over the Hudson thanks to \$874,000 in federal funds Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) secured to purchase and install energy-efficient LEDs to illuminate the bridge. After delivering brief remarks, Hinchey joined State Parks Commissioner Carol Ash and Walkway Over the Hudson Chairman Fred Schaeffer for the ceremonial lighting.

"Five years ago, when the Walkway over the Hudson was just coming together, I knew it was going to be something magnificent," said Hinchey. "This new lighting system will make the Walkway even better for the thousands of pedestrians and cyclists who enjoy the soaring views of the river as they cross the bridge each week. I am proud to have secured the federal funds that were used to make it happen."

The Walkway is now lit by 81,215 LED lights, which use one-tenth of the energy that traditional incandescent bulbs require. The lighting system was designed by Poughkeepsie's Andy Neal Lighting to be energy efficient and prevent light pollution in accordance with New York State's "Dark Skies Initiative." The LEDs were fabricated by workers at the Mid-Hudson Workshop for the Disabled.

"One of the great things about these new lights is that they are environmentally friendly," said Hinchey. "The fact that we are able to light up a bridge that is over one mile long without causing light pollution and by using such a small amount of energy is a testament to the innovation and technological advances that are happening right here in the Hudson Valley. Andy Neil and the hard working people at the Mid-Hudson Workshop deserve credit for doing such a brilliant job."

In all, \$3.75 million in federal funds have been allocated for the Walkway Over the Hudson. In September 2005, Hinchey secured \$874,000 in transportation funds, which represented the first significant contribution to the overall project. This money was used for the Walkway's illumination. In February 2009, Hinchey delivered another \$475,000 in federal funds, which helped lay more groundwork for \$2.4 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that Hinchey actively supported and voted for last year.

The Walkway over the Hudson is built on the 119 year old Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge, which stands 212 feet above the Hudson River. Until the renovation, which repurposed the bridge for

pedestrian use, the 19th Century structure had received virtually no maintenance or repairs. A 1974 fire ended its use as a railroad bridge. The Walkway's rehabilitation project included the stabilization of the walkway onto the bridge from the western shore of the Hudson River on the Ulster County side and construction of an observation deck. Hinchey participated in the groundbreaking event on May 27th of 2008. The 1.25 mile trail spanning the Hudson River, which links to over 30 miles of trail systems opened to the public on October 3, 2009.